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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a collaborative effort between a local education agency (LEA) and an institution of higher education to link inservice education with induction--teachers teaching teachers. The program, based on the Joyce coaching paradigm and recent cognitive development research, posits that long-term training conducted by trained teachers offers a formidable approach to induction and is rejuvenating for experienced faculty. Survey results support the effectiveness of LEA efforts. (Author/CB)

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SWEET REJUVENATION: LINKING IN-SERVICE AND TEACHER INDUCTION

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"SWEET REJUVENATION": LINKING IN-SERVICE

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a collaborative effort by an LEA and an IHE to link in-service education with induction - teachers teaching teachers. The program, based on the Joyce coaching paradigm and recent cognitive-development research, posits that long-term training conducted by trained teachers offers a formidable approach to induction and is rejuvenating for experienced faculty. Survey results support the effectiveness of LEA efforts.

Something "awesome" is happening in Wake County! At a time when the morale of teachers nationally is at an all time low and public sentiment about the state of education is eroding, our teachers are revitalized, reactivated, and rejuvenated.

Amid the clamour for educational reform, which has encompassed all areas from the quality of textbooks to the quality of teaching, classroom teachers and staff have shouldered the burden of reform. With the ardent belief that reform should begin with the young people entering the profession, our teachers and staff have responded to the challenge to upgrade their skills as effective supervisors of student teachers and beginning teachers. Public criticism, faculty/staff scrutiny and IHE consultaion have created the impetus for the development of an effective in-service teacher education program. Consequently, we have implemented a unique model for mentor teacher training which has reaped surprising benefits.

The uniqueness of the Wake County Program--that quality which distinguishes it from similar efforts in other systems--is the relevant and practical nature of the mentor training sessions. Experienced teachers, drawn to the program by the desire for professional growth, have enthusiastically responded to the major components of the training: an emphasis on validating teaching "survival skills" with sound educational theory; an adherance to Joyce's training model; a regard for conditions which promote growth (1983, Sprinthall) and a commitment to collegial coaching (Showers, 1985).

The State Board of Education in North Carolina established procedures for assuring the quality of teachers entering its classrooms--the Quality Assurance Program. The most significant emphasis of the QAP addresses the need for a working partnership between local school systems and institutions of higher education. Its basic aim is to facilitate and improve programs of professional laboratory experiences/student teaching. The program proposes to extend the professional education of teachers into the first 2 years of teaching and to require a review of teaching performance prior to the issuance of a continuing certificate. The educational support system cooperatively designed by local education agencies and institutions of higher education provides resources, educational activities and continued support.

Wake County has interfaced efforts to train cooperating teachers and to establish an educational support system with key aspects of the State Board of Education Quality Assurance Program: Supervision of Student Teaching Experiences, and Evaluation, and Education Support Systems. Although we already had an in-service program in place for cooperating teachers, evaluations of these sessions indicated that we needed to provide much more to meet their needs as cooperating teachers. Given teacher needs and QAP expectations for teacher certification, we collaborated with the IHE in developing a curriculum which could serve as a "state of the art" training program for teachers who supervise novice teachers (student teachers and beginning teachers). The practical experiences and training of teachers as adult

learners were best provided in materials presented by Thies-Sprinthall (1983) and that of Joyce and Showers (1982). A training program evolved which included four key components that make it unique and substantive.

The first component is the commitment to long-term training. This commitment followed on the heels of immense national reviews of in-service teacher education by Joyce, Howey, and Yarger (1976) which reported the universal skepticism and dissatisfaction by teachers for in-service training. The indication was that the "fast food" approach to in-service was ineffective. To insure long-term training, a two-semester sequence was implemented to include a practicum during which teachers practice their new supervisory skills in a supportive atmosphere. Throughout the practicum, the teachers work with student teachers, beginning teachers, or colleagues. This component is consistently affirmed by the teachers taking the two semester sequence as "vital." The description of the two courses follows:

Semester I Introduction to the Supervision of the Novice Teacher

I. Building a Helping Relationship

II. History of Developmental Theory

III. Effective Teaching Survival Skills

IV. Clinical Supervision and Coaching

V. Developmental Supervision Strategies

VI. Problem Solving

VII. Ending a Relationship

Semester II Practicum

I. Building a Helping Relationship

II. Phases of Concern

III. Conceptual Development/Matches-Mismatches

IV. Cycles of Assistance

V. Teacher Performance Appraisal

VI. Ending a Relationship

A second key factor in the training is the communications component. This component has far-reaching ramifications in that it impacts both the effectiveness of the mentor-mentee relationship and classroom instruction. Active listening and problem solving serve as the foundation (Gordon, 1974).

The third factor is that the curriculum/training is based on research and theory related to how adults grow and develop. The seminal research of Harvey, Schroeder, and Hunt (1961) provided this framework for connecting developmental theory with classroom teaching. The research shows that teachers at more complex developmental stages are more effective as classroom teachers and as teacher supervisors (Thies-Sprinthall, 1981). A cognitive developmental teaching/learning framework is incorporated as the keystone for the training (Sprinthall, Thies-Sprinthall, 1983).

TEACHING/LEARNING FRAMEWORK

Joyce's Training Components	Cognitive-Developmental Conditions
1. Describe the model to be acquired	1. Role-Taking
2. View and model-demonstrate	2. Guided Reflection
3. Plan and peer teach the model	3. Balance
4. Adapt and generalize the model	4. Support & Challenge
	5. Continuity

Finally, the training is conducted by classroom teachers who have participated in a university three-semester sequence (Thies-Sprinthall, 1986). The first semester classroom training involves an introduction to theory and practical application; the second semester involves an extended practicum where the teacher serves as a mentor under the guidance of the university consultant. The third semester, supervised by a university professor, involves an internship during which mentors assume the new role of "teachers teaching teachers." This is a formidable aspect of training which results in tremendous growth for the trainers.

The fast-paced, highly structured curriculum which integrates theory, modeling, practice and guided reflection (self-assessment) draws many connectors to the daily experiences of classroom teachers. As teachers review the six survival skills during the first few training sessions, they apply the techniques and test the theories in the realistic settings of their own classrooms. Consequently, the training sessions have successfully resolved the reservations of many

veteran teachers who often criticize in-service workshops as impractical, idealistic, and generally a rehash of "old stuff." The program sells itself; the waiting list of experienced teachers continues to grow with those who are clamoring to get into the course. Rejuvenation is Sweet!

Most significant is the fact that the sessions are taught by classroom teachers--a component which adds immense validity to the entire program. Participants and instructors "speak the same language;" they both return each day to the reality of the classroom setting. Again, the connectors become strong factors in the success of the program. As instructors speak of conditions necessary for growth-empathy, genuineness, regard, support and challenge--they constantly model these qualities while teaching the sessions. Participants often remark on their astonishment that strategies are being modeled--a woeful but consistent commentary on teacher training. This modeling component is vital to the program; participants are quick to connect these elements not only to the beginning teacher, but also to their own classroom experience. Active listening, problem solving, and developmental principles move from the realm of theory to reality as teachers "experience" the application and then test the theory in their own classrooms. Don Davies' idea of teachers teaching teachers to teach, works! It works simply because teachers, teach! Who is more adept at teaching "teaching skills" than teachers?

The impact of the program grounded on theory and research reverberates throughout the system. Good teachers become better as they refine their teaching skills in the process of nurturing novice

teachers, while novice teachers grow toward excellence in a supportive environment. The "fallout" from this mentor explosion is that the children in Wake County are the winners. After all, isn't that what it's all about! Comments from program participants reflect the reasons for calling this program "sweet rejuvenation."

"I needed to be uplifted. I enjoy sharing with other teachers--this is something we seldom do... At first I felt wiped out, as low as I have been during my 25 years of teaching; now I'm ready... Thanks."

Secondary Teacher

"I feel more confident each day I walk into my classroom because I know what I am going to do. My mentor has helped me be more relaxed about facing each new day with my students. If I run into a problem, I know my mentor is there. I like it because she not only tells me what is not working, but shows me how I can improve to make things go better. Since my first day of work she's been right there for me. I feel I've been given more than a mentor-- I've found a friend."

Middle School Beginning Teacher

"The personal growth that took place was the most significant experience in the course for me. I am much more tuned in to specific teaching skills that I was beginning to put 'on the back burner.' I feel that I am a more effective teacher because of this course."

Elementary Mentor Teacher

"This program was helpful to my professional growth which I think is extremely important to an educator. We, in this profession, cannot risk stagnation if we are to inspire today's youth. The American folk-singer Bob Dylan once said, 'He who is not busy being born is busy dying.' In my opinion a truly effective teacher must realize this and not be afraid to be challenged, to change, and to grow. We must instead take every opportunity to do so. Therefore, I am pleased to have been a part of the program."

Mentored Middle School Choral Director

But is this mentor explosion combustible in a powerful and purposeful manner or is it a passing fad? To answer this question, we had to do a preliminary evaluation. Research and/or evaluation of mentoring in educational settings is quite limited (Clete Galvez-Hjornevik, 1986). Properly admonished by the warnings of Lisa Wagner (1985) that mentor programs "...may well become just another bright flash in the fast-changing pan that brings educational reform proposals into the light," a survey was designed which could alert program administrators to the effectiveness of the training and outcomes in the schools.

Of the 348 surveys distributed in the schools, 206 were returned. The survey included reactions by mentor teachers, administrators, and beginning teachers. The following table shows the percentage of returns by roles:

TABLE I

Beginning Teacher	Mentor	Administrator
116 Distributed	116 Distributed	116 Distributed
56 Returned	85 Returned	65 Returned
48 %	73 %	56 %

As one might expect, the percentages reflect a relatively high rate of return from the mentors themselves. A low return from the mentors would have been due cause to head for the hills given the intent of the survey. As to the results of the survey, the following table identifies the questions asked as well as the number of responses and percentages of each sample which chose each degree of impact:

TABLE II

	No Impact	Low Impact	Moderate Impact	High Impact
N=61	1.	1, 2%	22, 36%	38, 62%
N=47	2.	2, 4%	27, 57%	18, 38%
N=55	3.	4, 7%	30, 54.5%	21, 38%
N=50	4. 4, 8%	14, 28%	26, 52%	6, 12%
Mentor Responses				
N=84	1.	2, 2%	25, 30%	57, 68%
N=84	2.	1, 1%	26, 31%	57, 68%
N=84	3. 3, 4%	19, 23%	43, 51%	19, 23%
N=81	4. 8, 10%	34, 42%	36, 44%	4, 5%
Administrators				
N=58	1.	3, 6%	10, 17%	45, 78%
N=59	2.		18, 31%	41, 69%
N=59	3.	3, 5%	33, 56%	23, 39%
N=59	4. 2, 3%	12, 20%	30, 51%	15, 25%

1. The mentor program has had the following effect on beginning teachers...
2. The mentor program has had the following effect on teachers who now serve as mentors...
3. The mentor program has had the following effect on the overall building-level instructional program...
4. The mentor program has had the following effect on other colleaues...

IMPACT OF SURVEY

Although surveys have the disadvantage of being static and retrospective, they can, in large enough numbers, suggest which way the tide is headed. Results indicate that the tide is pushing strongly in favor of our four-year-effort to provide support and challenge for beginning teachers. A conservative interpretation of the results indicates that when it comes to perceptions of mentors, beginning teachers and administrators a minimum of 94% of each group believed that when one considers impact on beginning teachers, mentors, and administrators, impact has been moderate to high.

Also of particular interest are the perceptions of administrators towards mentor program impact on the overall building-level instructional program. Once again, a striking 93% of the respondents believed impact was moderate to high. These are remarkable affirmations for an innovative program which strives to pursue long-term solutions to the persistent need for support of beginning teachers and preservice teachers. When these results are coupled with evidence that the training of teacher trainers and mentors has served as a crucial source of rejuvenation (Thies-Sprinthall and Sprinthall, 1987) one can argue that the program described has much to offer other school districts.

Two additional questions were asked to elicit written feedback. The first incomplete statement was "as you think about mentoring, what adjectives best describe the mentor-mentee relationships in your school?" There was a striking amount of similarity in the adjectives identified by all three groups. Adjectives include trusting,

rewarding, confidential, supportive, confidence-building, caring, collaborative, constructive, non-threatening, stabilizing, challenging, and empathic. The fact that these adjectives surfaced in the writings of three very different populations - beginning teachers, mentors, and adminstrators - confirms that two key objectives of the program, to provide support and challenge, are perceived by those involved as an actuality.

The second question was intended to identify areas of the program in need of modification. "What adjustments would make the program more effective in your school?" Once again, there was a striking consensus of opinion on several major needs. Two major themes ran throughout the comments. The first of these included the most frequent response by mentors which was the need for more time. Specifically, there was mention of the need for a joint planning period each day with the mentee. Research supports the value of this kind of collaborative work (Niles and Lalik, 1985). Surprisingly, a large number of administrators (more than 20) also expressed the need for a mutual planning period between mentor and mentee. Some schools are now experimenting with a schedule which allows mentors and mentees an additional planning period each day. Preliminary reports confirm the value and importance of an extra planning period. The second major theme involved initial contact between mentors and mentees. There was a consistent and frequent declaration by mentors and beginning teachers that assignments should be made before the school workdays commence. Beginning teachers frequently mentioned the first planning days as critical periods during which a mentor would have been invaluable.

NEW DIRECTIONS

The future of the program is bright and unlimited as teachers continue to develop personally and professionally while helping others become more effective teachers. We will continue to expand the services of the mentor program through a unique multi-faceted support system.

NETWORKING - Network meetings are held for the purpose of informing mentor teachers of system policies and procedures regarding student teachers and beginning teachers. Updates on the "state of the art" are given through sharing current periodical literature. Mentors are provided opportunities at the meetings to share concerns as well.

COMMUNICATION - Twice a year we publish a newsletter called "Mentor Connection: Teachers Teaching Teachers." This publication includes research information, updates on mentor meetings and highlights successful programs in the system.

MENTOR TRAINER MEETINGS - Mentor trainer meetings are held in November, April, and June for the purpose of program evaluation and course implementation.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE - An advisory council has been organized to coordinate and direct networking activities within the system. The Committee also meets annually with representatives from other merging mentor programs within the state. These meetings are organized by the staff member from N.C.S.U. who teaches the 3 semester sequence.

REFRESHER COURSES - Refresher courses on key elements of the training program are planned as part of the on going rejuvenative process.

SKILLS RENEWAL - Mentors are asked to supervise a student teacher, beginning teacher or a colleague at the one every two years. This way the care of supervisors for both student teachers and beginning teachers is equally strong.

The in-service teacher education program which we have labeled mentor training has generated an encouraging solution to the ever-present need for effective pre-service and induction efforts. Collaboration between staff, teachers, and IHE representatives, led to the implementation of a long-term in-service sequence which, supported by skill development and cognitive-developmental research, has placed teachers in the driver's seat - teachers teaching teachers!

Available evidence from surveys, course evaluations and interviews suggests that beginning teachers, mentors and administrators view the program results in a highly favorable light. Indeed, we maintain that there is significant momentum propelling this unique effort. It is innovative, collegial, and rejuvenating!

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